

# **2008 HealthierUS School Challenge:**

## **Recognizing Nutrition Excellence in Schools**

Since 2004, USDA's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) has been recognizing schools that have taken a leadership role in helping students learn to make healthy eating and active lifestyle choices through the HealthierUS School Challenge. Schools have been awarded a gold, silver or bronze level award for making changes to their school nutrition environments, improving the quality of the foods served, and providing students with more nutritious, healthy choices.

The criteria for the HealthierUS Challenge has recently been updated and revised to reflect the *2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans* including requirements for competitive, a la carte foods and physical education. The new criteria also include requirements for a new higher award level: *Gold Award of Distinction*.

To ease the transition, the new 2008 criteria will be effective January 1, 2009. All applications from schools received by State offices by December 31, 2008 may be reviewed using the 2004 criteria. States may accept applications for review using the 2008 criteria beginning September 1, 2008. Application forms and materials will be available on the Team Nutrition website in September 2008.

FNS strongly encourages schools to apply under the new 2008 criteria but as previously noted applications using the 2004 criteria will be accepted through December 2008. All applications received by States after January 1, 2009 must be reviewed based on the new 2008 criteria. The following chart outlines the 2008 Criteria. Additional tools and resources including application packets will be available on the Team Nutrition website in September 2008.

## 2008 Criteria for the HealthierUS School Challenge

These criteria include a new award: *Gold Award of Distinction*. To achieve this award a school must meet all the requirements for a Gold Award plus additional criteria in the area of sodium content of competitive foods and/or additional Physical Education criteria. See the chart below for more details.

Lunch Menu Item	Criteria
<b>Vegetables</b>	<p><b><i>Gold/Silver/Bronze:</i></b>            At least five different vegetables must be offered each week. All servings must be at least ¼ cup. Of these five:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dark green or orange vegetables must be offered three or more days per week (at least one choice must be different).</li> <li>• Cooked dry beans or peas (legumes) must be offered each week (includes canned dry beans and peas).</li> </ul>
<b>Fruits</b>	<p><b><i>Gold/Silver/Bronze:</i></b>            At least five different fruits must be offered each week. (Fresh, frozen, canned, dried or 100% juice.)            All servings must be at least ¼ cup.</p> <p><b><i>Gold :</i></b> 2 must be fresh  <b><i>Silver/Bronze:</i></b> 1 must be fresh</p> <p>Dried fruit must have no added sweetener (nutritive or non-nutritive); canned fruit must be packed in juice or light syrup. 100% juice can only be counted as a fruit once per week.</p>

<b>Lunch Menu Item</b>	<b>Criteria</b>
<b>Bread/Grains</b>	<p><b><i>Gold:</i></b> At least one grains/bread <u>serving</u> of a whole grain food must be offered each day in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP).</p> <p><b><i>Silver/Bronze:</i></b> At least one grains/bread <u>serving</u> of a whole grain food must be offered 3 or more times per week in the NSLP.</p> <p>Whole grain food is defined as “whole grain as the primary ingredient by weight”, i.e., whole grain listed first in the ingredient statement. Serving is defined by the Food Buying Guide.</p>
<b>Milk</b>	<p><b><i>Gold/Silver/Bronze:</i></b> Only low-fat (1% or less) or fat-free offered daily.</p>

	<b>Criteria for Competitive Foods/A La Carte/Second Servings</b>	
<b>General Criteria</b>	<p><b>Gold</b>  <i>Throughout the school day (including meal periods) and throughout the school campus, the school does not sell/serve foods or beverages other than reimbursable meals.</i></p> <p><b>OR</b>  <i>Throughout the school day (including meal periods) and throughout the school campus, other than reimbursable meals, the school sells/serves only foods or beverages that meet the following criteria:</i></p> <p><b>Silver/Bronze</b>  <i>During meal periods in the foodservice area, the school does not sell/serve foods or beverages in competition with reimbursable meals.</i></p> <p><b>OR</b>  <i>During meal periods in the foodservice area, the school sells/serves only these foods and beverages (listed in the following criteria) in competition with reimbursable meals.</i></p>	
<b>Total Fat</b>	≤35% of calories from total fat, excluding nuts, seeds, nut butters and reduced-fat cheese.	
<b>Trans Fat</b>	“Trans fat-free” less than .5 g <i>trans</i> fat per serving.	
<b>Saturated Fat</b>	< 10% of calories from saturated fat. Reduced- fat cheese is exempt.	
<b>Sugar</b>	≤35% of weight from sugar (includes naturally occurring and added sugars) Fruits and vegetables are exempt.	
<b>Sodium</b>	<b>Gold Award of Distinction:</b> <200mg per non-entrée <480 mg per entree	<b>Gold/Silver/Bronze:</b> ≤480mg per non-entree ≤600mg per entree
<b>Portion Sizes</b>	Not to exceed the serving size of the food served in the NSLP/School Breakfast Program (SBP); for other sales, the item package or container is not to exceed 200 calories.	
<b>Fruits and Non-Fried Vegetables</b>	Fruits and vegetables may be fresh, frozen, canned, or dried, and they must be found in Chapter 2 of the Food Buying Guide. Dried fruit must have no added sweetener (nutritive or non-nutritive); canned fruit must be packed in juice or light syrup.	

	<b>Criteria for Competitive Beverages/ A La Carte/Second Servings</b>
<b>Milk</b>	Only low-fat (1% or less) or fat-free milk meeting State and local standards for pasteurized milk and/or USDA approved alternative dairy beverages may be offered daily.
<b>Milk serving sizes</b>	Milk serving size is limited to 8-fluid ounces.
<b>Other Approved Beverages</b>	Fruit and vegetable juices: 100% full strength with no sweeteners or non-nutritive sweeteners. Water (non-flavored, non-sweetened, non-carbonated, non-caffeinated, without non-nutritive sweeteners).
<b>Juice serving size</b>	Juice serving size is limited to 6-fluid ounces.

	<b>Additional Criteria</b>
<b>Wellness Policy</b>	Schools must submit a copy of their wellness policy with their application.
<b>Fundraising</b>	Primarily non-food items should be sold through school fundraising activities. However, if food items are sold during the school day, they must meet the guidelines for competitive foods.
<b>Physical Activity</b>	<p>Structured physical education must be provided:</p> <p><b><i>Gold Award of Distinction:</i></b> minimum average 150 min/per week throughout the school year.</p> <p><b><i>Gold:</i></b> minimum average of 90 min/week throughout the school year.</p> <p><b><i>Silver/Bronze:</i></b> minimum average of 45 min/week throughout the school year.</p> <p>For all awards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provide daily opportunities for unstructured physical activity, such as recess, for all children.</li> <li>▪ School demonstrates a commitment to neither deny nor require physical activity as a means of punishment</li> </ul>
<b>Nutrition Education</b>	<p>Nutrition education must be provided to students in multiple grades and must be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provided for at least half, but no fewer than two, of the grade levels.</li> <li>• Part of a structured and systematic unit of instruction, involving multiple channels of communication</li> </ul> <p>Also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school must demonstrate a commitment to prohibit the use of food as a reward</li> </ul>